



FEATURE ARTICLE

## WHY DOES MY POWER BILL CHANGE?

Your power bill is influenced by many factors in addition to how you use energy. Read below to learn why your bill might change even if your energy usage habits have stayed the same.

### Weather

A large portion of your home's energy bill comes from keeping it at a comfortable temperature. This can be difficult during extreme heat in the summer and through the freezing winter months. Even if you keep your thermostat at the recommended 68 degrees in the winter, when it is 28 degrees outside your system has to run longer than when it is 60 degrees outside. To offset these cold weather costs, caulk around your windows, draw the blinds at night and wear thick, cozy socks.

### Longer Billing Cycle

The number of days in a billing cycle varies based on the number of days in a month and occasionally is altered to make sure your bill is not due on a holiday. If you would like to spread the cost evenly throughout the year, you can sign up for our budget billing program. Visit [pemc.coop/payment-options](http://pemc.coop/payment-options) to learn more.

### Lifestyle Changes

When comparing your energy bill to past usage, be sure to reflect on what might have happened during

each bill cycle. If you had a long-term guest, used the oven or other large appliances more or left the lights on longer to account for shorter days, your energy bill will reflect that activity. Monitoring your daily energy use with SmartHub can help you limit your usage and save money throughout the month.

### Faulty or Aging Appliances

As your appliances age, they use energy less efficiently. Your 15-year-old refrigerator requires more energy than a new ENERGY STAR® refrigerator. To receive advice on which energy-efficient appliance upgrades are right for your home, visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) or contact one of our technical experts at 800.222.3107. As a cooperative member, you can also take advantage of a free home energy audit where our experts will provide you with custom energy saving recommendations!

To learn more about our programs to help members save energy and money, visit [pemc.coop/save-energy-money](http://pemc.coop/save-energy-money) and [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).

## IMPORTANT DATES

MAR 31

### Basketball Camp Applications due

Rising 6–8th graders are eligible to apply for this all-expense-paid scholarship to attend summer basketball camp at UNC and NC State. Visit [pemc.coop](http://pemc.coop) to apply.

MAR 31

### College Scholarship Applications due

Local high school seniors can apply for this funding toward their college education online at [pemc.coop](http://pemc.coop).

APR 27

### Annual Meeting

Yearly business meeting of Piedmont Electric.

## STEPS TO RESTORING POWER

*Serviceman Jeff Young walks us through the restoration of an after-hour power outage.*

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## THE BENEFITS OF PREPAY

*What if paying for electricity was as easy as filling your car's tank with gas?*

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## THE COST OF ENERGY: VALENTINE'S DAY EDITION

*Learn about the incredible value of your electricity.*

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## FEBRUARY RIGHT-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE

### ORANGE COUNTY ROADS:

Smith Level Road  
BPW Club Road  
Damascus Church Road  
Heritage Hills Subdivision  
Dogwood Acres  
Westbrook Drive  
Berryhill Drive



PIEDMONT ELECTRIC SPOTLIGHT

Have you ever wondered what happens between the time when your power goes out at night and when it's restored? We asked Serviceman Jeff Young, a veteran and lineman of over eight years, to walk us through the steps our linemen take during after-hour power outages.

**11:00 p.m.** When an outage occurs, the two on-call linemen receive a phone call from dispatch letting us know both the physical address and the nine-digit location of the outage. This nine-digit location shows where the outage is on our lines. Since we have two linemen on-call both in Roxboro and Hillsborough, we can be at most outage locations within 45 minutes. If the road conditions are poor, our response time will slow just a little. Even though there is a sense of urgency to restore power, we must still arrive safely.

**11:10 p.m.** I say good night to my wife and I'm on my way. Each on-call lineman has either a bucket truck or a pickup truck equipped to handle outage situations so that we are ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

**11:30 p.m.** Once we arrive on site, we patrol the lines and check the poles, looking for the cause of the outage. The nine-digit location number will take us to an individual member's home, but if it is a large-scale outage,



## We're all in it together

we may need to ride miles of line before we discover the issue.

After the problem is identified, our priority is to restore power to the most members first and then work on the smaller outages affecting a handful of members. Our electric grid has reclosers/breakers that turn off the power flow when it senses trouble on the connected lines, so when possible we reroute and restore power to any lines not affected once the cause of the outage has been isolated. This is why members might notice that their neighbors have power while theirs is still offline.

If you find yourself in this situation and are curious, it is much safer to call our outage line at 800.449.2667 instead of walking outside to speak to the linemen. We keep dispatch updated so that you can receive this information in the safety and comfort of your home.

**12:00 a.m.** Typically the two on-call linemen are able to fix most outages. If the power is out due to a broken pole or a large tree, we notify our supervisor and additional linemen and/or right-of-way crews are sent



Jeff Young, Serviceman

to the site. This is common during hurricanes, ice and snow storms. We work during all weather conditions.

Because safety is our priority, we will not be in the bucket if the winds exceed 30 mph and we'll stand by in the trucks if there is lightning in the area until it's safe to go up and work on the lines.

When members are out of power for a long time, so are our families. We live in this community and want to restore power quickly for our members, neighbors and families. We're all in it together.

**2:00 a.m.** Our average restoration time is an hour and a half, but restoring power at night takes more time because we rely on flashlights and it's difficult when we can't see the terrain. Once everyone's power is restored, I'll head home and roll back into bed to catch a few hours of sleep.

**5:30 a.m.** I start my day, say good morning to my family and get ready to go into work and help our members. We genuinely care about our members and we all live together in this community. It's the co-op mindset that makes all the difference.



Visit [connections.coop/pemc](http://connections.coop/pemc) for discount details and a complete list of participating local businesses, national businesses, dentists, chiropractors, vision care centers and pharmacies.

### CO-OP CONNECTIONS® CARD DISCOUNTS

#### Health Center of Hillsborough

Free acupuncture and 30-minute therapeutic massage for new patients

Hillsborough, NC



#### Can't find your Co-op Connections® Card?

Visit [connections.coop/pemc](http://connections.coop/pemc) to print a new one or call our office at 800.222.3107 for a replacement.

# What if paying for electricity was as easy as filling your car's tank with gas?

Piedmont Electric's PrePay program allows you to buy energy before you use it, just like putting gas in your car.

## Benefits of PrePay

- No late fees.
- No deposit required.
- Customize your payment schedule based on your needs.
- Purchase energy when it is most convenient for you.
- Save about 10-12% on your energy bill!

**Enroll in PrePay today by calling 800.222.3107**

# Roses are red, Violets are blue, Savings are green!

How do your energy costs measure up to our favorite Valentine's Day treats?\*



*Stuffed teddy bear*

**= 624 hours of  
running a cozy  
electric blanket**



*A box of chocolates*

**= 125 hours of cooking a  
romantic dinner on the  
stove top**



*A dozen red roses*

**= 417 hours of blow  
drying your hair for  
your date**

\*Calculations are based on a \$10 stuffed teddy bear, a \$15 box of chocolates and a \$50 bouquet of a dozen red roses.

## STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) or at any USDA office, or call (866)

632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all the requested information in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to the USDA by:

1. Mail:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director,  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW,  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
2. Fax: (202) 690-7442
3. Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## PIEDMONT ELECTRIC CONNECTION

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### OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.  
800.222.3107

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### IF YOUR POWER GOES OUT, CALL US AT 800.449.2667

Our automated outage reporting system uses your phone number to determine your service location.

That's why it's important to update the number connected to your account. If your number has changed, let us know by completing the form that comes with your monthly bill or by calling 800.222.3107.

Pay account and access account information by phone 24 hours a day by calling 877.999.3394. Voice instructions will direct you through the system.